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# Panther Sports News

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--McAfee Gym will be the site of the oldest badminton tournament in the state this Friday and Saturday (Feb. 6-7) as the Panthers host the 22nd annual Eastern Illinois University Invitational. Play begins at 3 p.m. Friday and at 8 a.m. Saturday. Finals are slated for 4 p.m. Saturday. Besides EIU, those teams competing include Northern Illinois, Western Illinois, SIU-Carbondale, Illinois State, Ball State, Indiana State, Blackburn, and Carthage.

Although the format has changed somewhat over the years, the basic concept has remained the same. Started in 1959 by former EIU badminton coach Marise Daves, the tournament has been held on the same weekend in the same location ever since.

The 1981 version will feature four divisions of singles competition with three people from each school participating in each division. Doubles action will see three teams from each school competing in each of the two divisions.

Although Eastern is the defending champion, head coach Karen Earley is a bit apprehensive about her team's chances of repeating.

"We've had some problems in getting everything together, however the team is starting to play up to its potential now. I'm really hoping that we will finish in the top three," said Earley.

"The tournament as a whole will be very close. No one team will run away with it . . . it's really up for grabs," said Earley.

Among the top performers to participate in the invitational will be NIU's Janet Wentworth and Pam Peard. Wentworth, a Canadian, and Peard, from Ireland, were both top national performers in their country.

Giving the Wentworth-Peard doubles team an excellent battle for the first place trophy will be Illinois State's number one team of Sandy Silvis and Bruna Konny.

In singles competition, Carbondale's Nancy Little, who defeated Wentworth two weeks ago, will prove a strong challenge for the Division A title.

According to Earley, any of Eastern's top players are capable of pulling off an upset. "Denise Hadley (Hinsdale/Central) played very well against Peard this last weekend while Sue Gonnella (Niles/Maine East) looked good against Wentworth two weeks ago," said Earley.

"Our doubles teams could surprise people, too, " said Earley. "Chris Kelly. (Miller Place, NY) and Gonnella, Janet Haberkorn (Arlington Heights) and Jo Obrycki (Mt. Prospect) and Hadley and Jody Lyon (Arlington Heights) are playing well."